

**Press Release**  
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**900 artisans to receive USAID cooperation  
to improve their production**

The U.S. Government, through its Agency of International Development (USAID), inaugurated today a program to support Bolivian artisans. This effort, which includes US\$2.5 million in funding, is part of the ongoing cooperation program of the U.S. to Bolivia and will help artisans improve the production and marketing of their products both in Bolivia and abroad.

This initiative is part of a major regional effort aimed at working with local producers, suppliers, exporters, and NGOs to provide training, product development, marketing strategies and technical assistance to the handicrafts business. This program will be administered by Aid to Artisans, an NGO that will work in the cities of El Alto, Santa Cruz, and Sucre, as well as in the areas of Chapare, Yungas and the Altiplano.

The first scheduled activity within this outreach will be the signing of cooperation agreements with the following artisans' organizations: CIEP, COMART, Señor de Mayo, Artesanías AT – Alpaca, Artesanías Sorata, and the Mixed Association of Self-Taught Embroidery Artists.

Following the signing of the agreements, approximately 2,000 artisans of El Alto and rural towns in the Altiplano will receive technical support to improve their production. During the next days the program will be implemented in other areas of the country. One of the most important features of the program is that it will offer participating artisans direct access to international markets, especially in the United States and Europe.